

OPENFORMS | CONTENT IN FORMS

OVERVIEW

·SIMPLE·
·SEPARATED·
·CLEAR·

We use forms for collecting information, but sometimes we need to explain a process or provide information within a form. You should follow these general rules for content within forms:

- Keep it simple: if you need two paragraphs of text, it belongs on a webpage – not in your form.
- Separate detailed instructions into lists: make it easier for your customers to read and understand.
- Use clear language: follow the City's voice and tone guidelines. Avoid government/industry jargon.

HEADER

·TITLES FOR SPLIT FIELDS·
·SECTIONS WITHIN SECTIONS·

Headers are used as titles in specific situations:

- When you are asking for information that is split into different fields (name, address, etc.)
- When you have a smaller section within a single section of a form

A form example for a section titled "Your Address". It contains two input fields. The first field is labeled "Number and Street" with a "required" tag and contains the text "300 Monroe Ave NW". The second field is labeled "City" with a "required" tag.

PARAGRAPH

·PROVIDE INFORMATION·
·KEEP IT SHORT·
·LINK TO WEBPAGES·
·CONSISTENT VOICE & TONE·

Use paragraph fields to provide short pieces of information.

- Don't overload the customer with information: keep it short. A customer using a form likely went there to get something done. Requiring too much reading in the form could drive them away.
- If you need to give the customer detailed policy information, use the paragraph field to add a hyperlink to the appropriate webpage.
- Use approachable but professional language, as detailed in the voice and tone guidelines.

You'll see your eligibility results on this page. If you applied for more than one board or commission, then you need to set a priority for each one you chose.

The above paragraph gives a clear and short explanation to the customer. Detailed instructions follow in a list.

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LIST

- BULLETED LISTS·
- DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS·
- SEPARATE INTO STEPS·

Use list to break down complex descriptions, processes, instructions, etc. into more manageable pieces.

- This helps the customer quickly understand information simply by scanning your text.

What does this board do?

- 4 members representing each of the City's 3 wards
- 1 City Commissioner sits on this board
- Makes and oversees the rules of the City's civil service hiring system

IMAGES

- NOT FOR DESIGN·
- DESCRIPTIVE·

Do not use images as a design element of your form. You should only use images to describe a piece of the transaction or service.

- For a good example, think of someone reporting a sidewalk that needs to be repaired.
- It could be because of a raised crack or several cracks in the sidewalk
- It could also be because of something called *spalling*
- Few people know what spalling is, so it is useful to show the customer an image of spalled concrete

